

Message Text

SECRET

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USSALTTWO

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TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON PLENARY, FEBRUARY 23, 1978
(SALT TWO - 1631)

REF: A. SALT TWO - 1632

B. SALT TWO - 1635

C. SALT TWO - 1628

1. AT FEBRUARY 23 PLENARY, WARNKE'S STATEMENT (REFTEL A) ADDRESSED RECENT SOVIET COMMENTS ON BEAR AND BISON HEAVY BOMBERS. IT RESTATED US VIEW THAT SOVIETS HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED ANY FEATURES WHICH ALLOW BISON TANKERS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM BISON BOMBERS, OR WHICH INDICATE THAT THEY CANNOT BE READILY CONVERTED. REGARDING BEAR ASW AIRPLANES, STATEMENT NOTED THAT EXTERNALLY OBSERVABLE FEATURES CITED BY SOVIETS AS DISTINGUISHING ASW BEARS FROM BEAR HEAVY BOMBERS DID NOT APPEAR RELEVANT TO THE HEAVY BOMBER ROLE, AND THAT THE US CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT ASW BEARS CAN BE USED IN SUCH A ROLE.

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2. SEMENOV'S STATEMENT (REFTEL B) REPEATED PRIOR SOVIET ARGUMENTS ON NEW TYPES OF ICBMS AND SLBMS. MENT OF ONE SINGLE RV-ICBM. SEMENOV STRONGLY CRITICIZED US-PROPOSED PROHIBITION ON IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING ICBMS, CLAIMING IT WAS AT VARIANCE WITH ARTICLE X OF TREATY

(MODERNIZATION AND REPLACEMENT). HE TABLED AS PROPOSED AGREED STATEMENT SOVIET DEFINITION OF "NEW TYPES" WHICH HE HAD INTRODUCED IN PRIVATE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21 (REF C).

3. IN RESPONSE, WARNKE CHALLENGED RATIONALE FOR AN EXCEPTION FOR A SINGLE-RV ICBM. HE RESTATED US BELIEF THAT ICBM FORCES ON BOTH SIDES ARE THE DESTABILIZING FACTOR IN THE STRATEGIC EQUATION. AGREEING WITH SEMENOV'S CONTENTION THAT US PROPOSAL WOULD INFRINGE ON "NATURAL AND LEGITIMATE" RIGHTS, WARNKE NOTED THAT THE BASIC PURPOSE OF ARMS CONTROL IS PRECISELY TO IMPEDE WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE ENTIRELY NATURAL AND LEGITIMATE.

4. IN PROTRACTED POST-PLenary DISCUSSION, SEMENOV RESTATED SOVIET RATIONALE RE ICBM TYPES AND CRITICIZED U.S. APPROACH AS NOT CONSTRAINING US STRATEGIC PROGRAMS SUCH AS MK12A, TRIDENT, M-X AND LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES. WARNKE REJECTED SEMENOV SUGGESTION THAT U.S. PROPOSAL WAS ONE-SIDED AND STRESSED PURPOSE IN SALT OF CONSTRAINING STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS.

5. DATA BASE: I CONFIRMED 950 FIGURE FOR SOVIET ICBM LAUNCHERS BUT SAID CLARIFICATION NEEDED RE SOVIET ICBM LAUNCHER FIGURE OF 1398, WHICH OUR NTM INDICATED
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SHOULD BE 1416. I SAID DIFFERENCE MAY STEM FROM 18 LAUNCHERS OF SAME TYPE AT TYURA-TAM WHICH US CONSIDERS PART OF OPERATIONAL FORCE. NOTING INFORMAL NATURE OF DATA BASE DISCUSSIONS, I ASKED SEMENOV HOW HE PREFERRED TO PROCEED, AND WHETHER HE WISHED TO HEAR US RATIONALE NOW OR LATER. HE REQUESTED RATIONALE NOW, AND I SAID US NTM HAD INDICATED LOADING WITH NO SUBSEQUENT FIRINGS, ROUTINE MAINTENANCE AT LAUNCHERS, PRESENCE OF COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OPERATIONAL COMPLEXES, GSE WHICH MAINTAINED IN ACTIVE STATUS, AND PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WARHEAD HANDLING FACILITY. SEMENOV SAID HE CONFIRMED THAT ACTUAL NUMBER OF SOVIET ICBM LAUNCHERS WAS 1398, HE NOTED AGREEMENT ON 950 SOVIET SLBM LAUNCHER FIGURE, AND SAID SOVIET SIDE WOULD RETURN SOON TO SUBJECT.

6. HIGHLIGHTS CABLE ON OTHER POST-PLenary DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWS. NEXT MEETING THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1978.
EARLE

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA. 2. AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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NNN

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